

MEMORIAL
OF
CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES RESIDING IN THE
VALLEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI,

PRAYING —

That military escorts may be placed on the route between that valley and California, and a permanent military post established near the gold region in that Territory for the protection of emigrants.

FEBRUARY 12, 1849.
Ordered to be printed.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States :

Your memorialists, citizens of the valley of the Mississippi, would respectfully state to your honorable body, that in consequence of the discoveries during the past year of the extraordinary mineral wealth in California, which on various occasions have been communicated to your honorable body, and of their great and increasing extent, as appears from the latest dates which have been received from the scene of the discoveries, not only a large body of citizens of the United States from the East, the valley of the Mississippi, and from Oregon, have already emigrated to California, but great additional numbers are expected to move for that country from the valley of the Mississippi during the ensuing spring and summer, by the route of the Grand Prairies and the Rocky mountains, carrying with them not alone the goods and property peculiar to emigrating parties, but merchandise and money to exchange for gold.

2d. And in consequence of the extraordinary riches already developed in these mines, their apparent durability, their wide extent of territory embraced, their great facility of operation on the surface by the poorer classes, without the expensive agency of machinery; for these reasons your memorialists are of opinion that the emigration to California will probably increase by this route, from the valley of the Mississippi, for years to come until the production of these mines, already wonderful, shall become immense.

3d. Your memorialists would accordingly suggest to your honorable body the wisdom of establishing an early, safe, and regular commercial communication by this route between California and the valley of the Mississippi, whereby the great number of citizen miners of the poorer classes (who, from the bosom of the nation are destined to employment in these mines,) may be accommodated with a safe, cheap, and direct trans-

mission of their mineral products to their friends in the older portions of the Union, at stated periods, and receive also, merchandise and money in return, at stated periods; and whereby the riches of the mines, thus diverted in a great degree from foreign countries, may be made to flow directly into the centre of the Union.

4th. And your memorialists would respectfully state to your honorable body, as the result of their opinion, after a careful examination of the subject, that this safe commercial communication between Missouri and California should be speedily established, as a large emigrating party will leave early in the ensuing spring for California; that it should be guarded by about 600 to 800 men, one-half mounted riflemen, and the other half dragoons; that the whole convoy force should be divided into four divisions, or reliefs, each of 150 to 200 men; that two of these divisions should always winter in California, and the other two at Fort Leavenworth.

5th. And your memorialists would respectfully state, that the season of operation for the convoys being the spring and summer, one of the two reliefs stationed in California, and one of the two reliefs stationed at Fort Leavenworth, would start in the spring simultaneously, (about the middle of April,) the former for Missouri, as the convoy for the mineral products; the latter for California, as the convoy for the emigrating party, merchandise, and money. And these, called the spring convoys, arriving at their several places of destination at Fort Leavenworth and California about the middle of July, would be immediately relieved by the summer convoys there waiting. Which last, starting from Fort Leavenworth and California simultaneously, (about the middle of July,) would arrive at their several places of destination about the 1st November; thus completing the whole trip from Missouri to California and back, and from California to Missouri and back, in six months; and thus affording to each miner in California a direct and safe transmission of the mineral wealth to the Mississippi valley twice a year, viz: 1st, by the spring convoy in April, and 2d, by the summer convoy in July; and securing also, in like manner, corresponding returns twice a year from the valley of the Mississippi. Wherein your honorable body will perceive, that as each convoy makes but half the trip in one year, or is on travel but three months in one year, the annual duties of the convoys would not only be possible, but easy and practicable to the troops; and might, in consequence, be continued even for years by the same convoy force; and when after a few years it became necessary to relieve this force by replacing another of equal strength, the two regiments of dragoons and the mounted rifle regiment now in service would always afford the means of relief without additional expense to the government.

6th. Your memorialists would accordingly respectfully ask of your honorable body the early passage of an appropriation for establishing a fort, or permanent post at some point in California convenient to the gold region, to serve for the point of departure of the convoys, for the assembling of the caravans, and for the collection and security of the mineral wealth, preparatory to its transmission east, under the protection of the convoys. And your memorialists would further respectfully state, that as one of the convoys would always be present at this post during the spring and summer, and two of them during the remaining six months of the year, there would in consequence be no additional expense incurred on account of the force necessary to garrison this fort.

7th. And in cases of the transmission of gold by the convoys from California, or in the remission of specie by the same from the valley of the Mississippi, wherein no agent or owner be present in charge of the same, cases which, as may appear to your honorable body, may be of frequent occurrence from the multitude of small miners employed in these mines; in such your memorialists would respectfully suggest that your honorable body would cause such regulations to be established concerning the reception of said gold and specie by the commander of the convoy, or other officer, concerning its safe-keeping in transit, and at the points of arrival and departure, and concerning its delivery and charges by the United States at the points of arrival of the convoys, as in your wisdom may appear to suit these new and pressing emergencies of commerce.

8th. Your memorialists would, in conclusion, beg leave most respectfully to submit to your honorable body the great necessity of a speedy and prompt action in the matters herein which we have the honor to submit to your honorable body, in order that the necessary arrangements may be completed by the Executive for the organization and location at Fort Leavenworth by the 1st April next, of the convoy force destined for this service; which force of itself, your honorable body will perceive, can occasion no additional expense to the government; the troops being already in service, partly in this country, partly in California, and the service (protection against Indians) being in conformity to the original object or law of their organization, so that your honorable body will perceive that there are no existing reasons which might prevent the immediate action of the government as regards the organization and location of the convoy force by the 1st April, and the early publication of the same throughout the valley of the Mississippi for the information of the people, preparatory to the departure of a large emigrating party in the spring. And your memorialists will ever pray, &c., &c.

